

The provision I have offered corrects this shortfall in the Federal Employees Retirement System, FERS. By increasing a Federal employee's FERS direct benefit by 1 percent for a period of extended convalescence resulting from a work related injury, the future reductions on Social Security and Thrift Savings Plan, TSP, benefits that result from the inability to make contributions during periods of disability are offset.

The retirement program for Federal Employees Retirement System employees has three distinct parts: Social Security, Federal Employees Retirement System Defined Benefits, and Thrift Savings Plan. Social Security taxes and benefits are the same for all participants. The Federal Employees Retirement System Defined Benefit and the Thrift Savings Plan are similar to defined benefit and 401(k) plans in the private sector. Unlike the impact on Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan, periods during which an individual is receiving Office of Worker's Compensation Programs disability payments have no impact when calculating the length of service for determining the Federal Employees Retirement System Defined Benefit retirement payments. To explain how the provision will work, I offer the following illustration.

As you know, Mr. President, the goal of the Federal Employees Retirement System is to provide retirement pay totaling about 56 percent of their "high three" annual salary. Under the old Civil Service Retirement System, a direct benefit plan, two percent of a person's salary was set aside to provide the retirement benefit of 56 percent employees did not pay into Social Security or a vested savings plan. Under Federal Employees Retirement System, one percent of a person's salary is set aside to provide the Federal Employees Retirement System Direct Benefit retirement payment of 26 percent of their "high three" annual salary with Social Security and Thrift Savings Plan retirement pay contributing the remaining 30 percent for a total of 56 percent. But increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System Direct Benefit calculation by one percentage point for extended periods of disability, one can adequately offset reduction in Social Security and Thrift Savings Plan payments resulting from the lack to payments into the systems during periods of disability caused by one the job injuries.

Louise Kurtz has earned our appreciation for the role she and her husband Michael have played in identifying this shortfall in Federal Employees Retirement System and in persevering in getting legislation introduced to address the problem. Indeed, Mrs. Kurtz continues to serve the American public even while recuperating from injuries sustained in the terrorist attack upon the Pentagon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senator from Wisconsin has been waiting for a

long time. The Senator from Pennsylvania is here to offer a unanimous consent request. It is my understanding that it would take 2 minutes. So I appreciate the courtesy of the Senator from Wisconsin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 4695

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I thank the Senators from Wisconsin and Nevada.

I rise to offer a unanimous consent request for the Senate to consider the partial-birth abortion bill that passed the House recently. We have been working diligently for the past 18 months, since the Supreme Court decision, to craft a partial-birth abortion bill that meets the constitutionality muster of the Nebraska decision. We think we have accomplished that, and I would argue that the House agrees with us.

The House recently passed this legislation 274 to 151. I understand time is short, and we have held this bill at the desk. I am hopeful and have been working to try to get a unanimous consent agreement that we can bring up this legislation for debate and discussion. We are willing to do it on a very limited time agreement, limited amendments, or as many amendments as the other side thinks is necessary.

This is an important piece of legislation. It is one the President said he would sign. It is one that received an overwhelming bipartisan vote in the House. I believe it will have a very strong bipartisan vote in the Senate.

While I understand this unanimous consent will be objected to this evening, I am hopeful we can continue to work together to try to bring up this very important piece of legislation that has been voted on here at least in the last three sessions of Congress with very strong majorities. Unfortunately, it was vetoed by President Clinton. We now have a President who will sign it. We have language that will meet constitutional muster. We will continue to work and seek the unanimous consent request to bring this up.

I now offer that request. I ask unanimous consent that at a time determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 521, H.R. 4965, a bill to prohibit the procedure commonly known as partial-birth abortion. I further ask unanimous consent that there be one relevant amendment on each side, with 1 hour of debate equally divided on each amendment, and that there be 2 hours for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; provided further that following the use or yielding back of time, the bill be read the third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of the bill, with no further intervening action or debate.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, the Senator from

Pennsylvania is absolutely right. Time is so critical. Separate and apart from the time involving this matter, there are a number of Senators who have spoken to me personally about their objection to proceeding to this matter, if it came to the floor while I was here. Senator FEINSTEIN was the last to have spoken to me in this regard.

I note an objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

IRAQ

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise to comment on the administration's "discussion draft" of a resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq.

This proposal is unacceptable. The administration has been talking about war in Iraq for quite some time now. Surely they had the time to draft a more careful, thoughtful proposal than the irresponsibly broad and sweeping language that they sent to Congress.

Apparently the administration put forward such broad language as a negotiating tactic—asking for everything in the hopes of getting merely a lot.

But we are not haggling over a used car. We are making decisions that could send young Americans to war and decisions that could have far-reaching consequences for the global campaign against terrorism and for America's role in the world in the twenty-first century.

To put forth such irresponsible language is to suggest that the President actually wants the authority to do anything he pleases in the Middle East—and that suggestion is likely to raise tensions in an already explosive region. To pepper the resolution with so many completely different justifications for taking action signals a lack of seriousness of purpose, and it obscures the nature of the mission on the table. And then to insist on immediate action while remaining largely incapable of pointing to any imminent threat and unwilling to flesh out the operation actually being proposed reveals a troubling approach to our national security.

The administration has a responsibility to define what the threat is. Is it a link between the Iraqi Government and al-Qaida, or is it Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction?

So far I certainly would conclude that there is insufficient evidence to support the first charge about al-Qaida, but the administration keeps using it whenever they feel like without information. Why? Are they trying to gloss over the real possibility that this focus on Iraq, if not managed with diplomatic skill, will, indeed, do harm to the global campaign against terrorism?

The threat we know is real—Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction or WMD—is unquestionably a very serious issue. What is the mission? Is the mission on the table disarmament or is it regime change? Has anyone heard a credible plan for securing the weapons of mass destruction sites as part of a